

them for the privilege of drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf.

Today, some of us introduced legislation to prevent any future royalty holidays for the oil companies, to seek and direct the Minerals Management Service to renegotiate these leases so that it does include the provisions of a minimum of a trigger but hopefully even a better royalty policy than that, and if those companies do not want to cooperate with that renegotiation, then they should be barred from future bids on the Outer Continental Shelf.

Now, to their credit, some of the major oil companies are suggesting that, in fact, they do owe the royalties, that there is a trigger mechanism. But Kerr-McGee and apparently some other companies have decided that they are going to challenge the whole law. They believe they are not obligated to pay any of these royalties, there is no trigger in this law. If that is the case, the taxpayer is just going to be hung out to dry by the major oil companies, and the major oil companies are going to abscond with the natural resources that belong to the people of this country.

It is wrong and Congress ought to correct it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WITNESS TO AFGHANISTAN'S PROGRESS

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, while leading a congressional delegation to Afghanistan, I was struck by the progress that the Afghan Government is making toward establishing a democracy, as well as with the enthusiasm and the determination of the Afghan people to finally and deservedly live in a free society.

The purpose of this trip, which also included stops in Iraq and Kuwait, was for Members of Congress to see firsthand the efforts being made toward U.S. goals of bringing stability and democracy to these nations.

In Afghanistan, where the prospects for reform once looked bleak, a transformation has occurred which has resurrected freedom, established legitimate leadership, and reinvigorated the population.

It is difficult to imagine that a mere 5 years ago the Taliban government

was thriving in this nation, exporting terrorism and promoting archaic extremism. Today media, cultural, business, and political leaders are free to meet, to discuss, to demonstrate and guide policies which are reforming their nation's economy, opening the political process, and liberating society from the fundamentalist laws which enslaved their nation.

This overwhelming progress has been made under leadership of President Hamid Karzai. Having met with President Karzai, I am assured that he is a capable and determined individual and he is able to continue to guide his nation into a transition to a modern democracy. To help facilitate this, Karzai and the Afghan Government are seeking to implement the Afghan Compact, which is a commitment to achieve specific goals relating to security, to the rule of law, to human rights, to economic development, to the elimination of narcotics trade within 5 years.

The task ahead remains difficult. It remains lengthy. But with the sustained help of the United States and other international donors and especially the demonstrated optimism and the resilience of the Afghan people, I am confident that the goals of this compact will be realized.

The progress being made in Afghanistan also has serious implications for our own Nation's security. Our congressional delegation conveyed to Afghan leaders that Congress remains deeply concerned about the mounting bloodshed in this Nation and over the ongoing narcotics trade which supplies over 90 percent of global opium and heroin.

My colleagues and I were also able to meet with high-ranking U.S. military officials, including Commanding General John Abizaid, to discuss the current military situation on the ground. I left impressed with our military's success against the insurgents and confident in our decisive victory over it.

Afghanistan was the first foreign front in our campaign to eradicate terrorism, and the success that we have had in eliminating the Taliban and establishing a democratic government is monumental and undeniable. In this area, however, our job is not complete, and America must not yield in our commitment to our troops and to their noble efforts. Standing side by side with its Afghan counterparts, our military will continue to actively seek out and destroy terror elements and work toward establishing complete stability and a transparent rule of law so that Afghanistan will never again be a safe haven for terrorists.

At a time when many are questioning the legitimacy of U.S. efforts abroad, Afghanistan serves as the perfect example of why our efforts to bring stability, freedom, and security are crucial, just, and attainable. Clearly, the new Afghanistan is emerging as one of our closest allies in our fight against extremists.

While meeting with the Speaker of the Afghan Parliament, he and I dis-

cussed the critical partnership which is developing between our two nations. Both nations are committed to furthering our alliance, which has already borne much fruit, with the knowledge that neither nation's goals will most effectively be realized without the friendship and deep cooperation of the other.

In our meeting, the Speaker expressed his hope that the Afghan people will serve as a "bridge to democracy for other peoples of the region."

I share the Afghan Speaker's hope, and I am confident that the inevitable spread of freedom and democracy will protect and preserve the American way of life here at home and make it available to those currently oppressed abroad.

The undeniable progress that continues to be made in Afghanistan makes peace, security, and prosperity all the more assured and protected—for Americans as well as Afghans.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment concurrent resolutions of the House of the following titles:

H. Con. Res. 71. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that there should be established a Caribbean-American Heritage Month.

H. Con. Res. 315. Concurrent resolution urging the President to issue a proclamation for the observance of an American Jewish History Month.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WYNN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

LIHEAP AND NATURAL GAS PRICES

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring attention tonight to an issue that both the House and the Senate have been debating. Low-income Americans are struggling to pay for heating bills this winter. Thankfully, this winter has not been as cold as expected, and heating bills have not increased as greatly as feared.

Less noticed, however, is that our low-income Americans also struggle to pay cooling bills. When the 90- and 100-

degree heat rolls around this year, the situation is going to become very critical very quickly. Air conditioners run on electricity, and a lot of electricity comes from natural gas. Natural gas prices have more than tripled in the last 3 years, from \$3 to \$4 per thousand cubic feet to \$10 to \$15.

These costs are really hitting home as State public utility commissions, PUCs, are increasing fuel charges on electric bills. The need for relief is going to be intense this summer, but the Federal Government's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, also called LIHEAP, is going to do next to nothing to help. For example, over 60,000 Houston area families got their power cut off in the summer of 2001 and only 14,443 people received 2001 cooling assistance statewide in Texas.

□ 2000

How can that be? The problem is that the LIHEAP formula is completely biased toward heating costs and ignores cooling costs. Many people believe that LIHEAP is a cold weather State program only. In the Northeast, the Midwest coalition lobbies for it and my Northeast and Midwest colleagues talk most about the program.

The media tends to cover LIHEAP funding issues only during the winter months. The shocking facts are that 3 percent of LIHEAP funding goes toward cooling homes in the summer, and 74 percent goes toward heating homes in the winter. Incredibly, LIHEAP spends three times more on administrative costs than it spends saving lives from heatstroke.

States like Texas, Florida and California that have large low-income populations vulnerable to hot weather get almost no funding. Low-income people in New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania receive eight or nine times as much LIHEAP per low-income resident.

In Texas, we have 3.7 million people who are eligible for LIHEAP due to income, but only 4.5 percent receive any assistance. The State of Texas canceled its Low Income Energy Assistance Program as electric bills were on their way up, and our constituents have nowhere to turn.

The cold weather bias is unacceptable, because hot weather kills just as many or more people than cold. According to the National Weather Service, which uses media reports and local government information, from 1985 to 2000 there were 2,596 fatalities caused by heat, an average of 235 per year, and 462 fatalities caused by cold, an average of only 24 a year.

It is scandalous that LIHEAP provides 3 percent of the funding for cooling, and hot weather kills 19 times more people than cold weather. However, a peer-reviewed study at the University of Delaware shows that over 1,000 people die from heat in the 15 biggest cities alone in the average summer, well over either government estimate. So neither National Weather Service nor the CDC data tells the full picture.

Reported causes of death are unreliable. The American Meteorological Society found several peer-reviewed academic studies showing that heart attack and stroke rates increased during hot weather. These heat-related deaths are often attributed to those other causes like heart disease and stroke and are not recorded as heat-related deaths.

The society's study found cold snaps do not cause death rates to go up versus average winter death rates, but extreme heat causes death rates to go up dramatically in the summer. As a result, the LIHEAP program is clearly completely divorced from reality. Heat kills more, but LIHEAP ignores cooling assistance.

The LIHEAP program is so biased because the funding formula is outdated. LIHEAP is based on an obsolete formula that is only still around because of the political support. The tragedy is that this political calculation is contributing to hundreds of preventable deaths annually.

Here are a few of the factors that go into the current LIHEAP formula: A ratio of State and national low income households in 1979; residential energy expenditures in 1979; a State's annual average number of heating days between 1931 and 1980; the number of a State's households at or below 125 percent of Federal poverty in 1980; a State's increase in home heating expenditures in 1980; the increase in total home residential heating expenditures between 1977 and 1980; and also 75 percent of each State's 1981 crude oil windfall profits tax formula.

This is a formula that is just ridiculous, and we need to update it. As we can see, this information is over 25 years old and completely irrelevant to modern reality. The fact that the primary LIHEAP formula still uses data from the date of the disco is unbelievable. There is absolutely no excuse for the program to allocate life-saving money based on such a formula.

While supporters of the current formula defend it by pointing to the \$2 billion trigger, it is a red herring. Our Northeast and Midwest friends and colleagues insist the rising tide lifts all boats. Once the funding gets above \$2 billion a year, a new formula directs it, but Congress has seldom voted over \$2 billion.

It is true that there is a trigger and this obsolete formula goes away for appropriations over \$2 billion. However, Congress rarely goes over that \$2 billion dollar trigger, and when they do, they use accounting tricks to avoid the modern, fair formula.

For example, members in the other body are trying to move \$1 billion in LIHEAP funding from the reconciliation bill from fiscal year 2007 to 2006. That would mean a total appropriation of \$3 billion, including what Congress has already done, which should help for cooling.

However, the reconciliation bill put \$750 million of that extra \$1 billion into a "contingency" account that uses no formula and the White House can do whatever it wants with it. His-

tory tells us that Southern states and cooling needs will see very little, if any, of that money.

Unsurprisingly Southern members have placed a hold on the bill.

The only solution is changing the LIHEAP formula.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee nearly accomplished a fairer formula during the energy bill debate, where my amendment would have lowered the "trigger" to \$1 billion to make a difference.

Northeastern and Midwestern members protested and offered a compromise to increase the authorization to \$5 billion, which many of accepted at the time as a good faith offer.

However, the budget reconciliation bill revealed the true motive to deny funding for cooling assistance and to deny much needed LIHEAP funding for Southern, mid-American, and Western states.

Along with my colleagues CHIP PICKERING, MIKE ROSS, CHARLIE GONZALEZ, MICHAEL BURGESS, and many others, we will continue to push for justice in the LIHEAP formula.

We can no longer allow Congress to use a 25 year old formula to ignore hundreds of preventable deaths every year—it is unconscionable and outrageous.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AMERICA IS NOT WINNING ON THE TRADE FRONT

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, America is not winning on the global trade front. Last Friday, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced the United States has the largest trade deficit in our history. So many more imports are coming in here than exports, and every American can affirm that every time they go to shop.

At \$725 billion in the red in 2005, that is three-quarters of a trillion dollars, our trade deficit is growing at a rate of more than \$1,500,000 every minute. This total is more than 18 percent higher than one year ago.

Sectors such as agriculture, as well as manufacturing, which once sustained a thriving economy here, are now withering. For every billion dollars in deficit, we are shedding a minimum of over 10,000 jobs. Workers' wages are not rising, their pensions are being cut, health care costs are going